Pathways to healing
Community Informant Detection Tool

Around the world, many people suffering from mental illness don’t access available mental healthcare services. This underutilization prevents us from reducing the burden of disease of mental, neurological and substance-use disorders.

1. They’re not aware of the services available to them
2. Neither they or their loved ones recognize that they might have a problem
3. The stigma attached to seeking mental healthcare
4. No confidence in the effectiveness of treatments

A way to increase utilization is pro-active community case detection. This means that people, with regular community engagement and very familiar in and with the community are taught to identify and refer people for assessment and treatment in nearby primary health care.

They developed the Community Informant Detection tool (CIDT). The tool helps detecting people with depression, alcohol-use disorder, epilepsy and psychosis and encourages identified people to seek care.

Lay community informants use the CIDT in their day-to-day life and interactions with people in their community, to see whether they know people that match the example provided in the vignette.

The tool helped to identify 509 people.

Of those initially identified, 264 started mental health treatment.

Using the CIDT has increased the utilization of mental health services in a low-income country with few health resources. The tool seems beneficial in rural settings where communities are close-knit and community informants are familiar with those in need of mental health services.

The Nepalese government has included the tool in national health care packages and the approach has been scaled up to other districts during the emergency response following the 2015 earthquakes.

Implementation of the CIDT could help address the treatment and access gaps for mental health in low and middle-income countries.

References
Proactive community case-finding to facilitate treatment seeking for mental disorders, Nepal Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Jordans, ML, Kohnt, BA, Lutel, NR, Lund, C. and Kompare, I.H.